

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 10274 060924Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /024 W
-----064998 060938Z /15

P R 060849Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7992
AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY
INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 10274

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, KS, US
SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF FRASER STAFFDEL VISIT; ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS CONTINUED FRONT PAGE COVERAGE OF
UPCOMING VISIT OF FRASER COMMITTEE INVESTIGATORS DECEMBER 6.
PAPERS FOCUSED ON CRITICISMS OF VISIT BY LEADERS OF GOVERNMENT
AND OPPOSITION PARTIES AND FONMIN'S REFERENCE TO VISIT AS
HARMFUL TO US-ROK RELATIONS. MOST PAPERS CARRIED ARTICLES
OR EDITORIALS SHARPLY CRITICIZING VISIT. OPPOSITION AND SOME
PRESS CALLING FOR FOREIGN MINISTER'S RESIGNATION FOR ISSUING
VISAS TO THE DELEGATION. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS FRONTPAGED THE DECEMBER 5 INFORMAL MEETING OF
THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHERE
MEMBERS REPORTEDLY CONDEMNED DISPATCH OF FRASER COMMITTEE
INVESTIGATORS TO KOREA AS A "VIOLATION OF SOVEREIGNTY" AND
"INSULT TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE". REPRESENTATIVES OF RULING
DRP AND YUCHONG-HOE AS WELL AS OPPOSITION NDP PROTESTED THE
VISIT AND CALLED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE APPROPRIATE
COUNTERMEASURES. DISCUSSION PRECLUDED SCHEDULED MEETING FOR
DISCUSSION OF TERRITORIAL SEAS LEGISLATION.

2. NDP LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG WAS QUOTED SAYING IT WAS A
MISTAKE FOR GOVERNMENT TO HAVE ISSUED VISAS TO THE GROUP.
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NOTING NDP HAD COOPERATED WITH COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
ISSUE YI SAID PROPOSED VISIT WAS AN INSULT TO KOREAN PEOPLE
AND WAS AN ACTION DRIVING A WEDGE BETWEEN THE US AND ROK.
YI SUGGESTED ROK SEND SIMILAR TEAM TO US FOR INVESTIGATION
OF US EFFORTS CONNECTED WITH KOREAN DECISIONS ON NORMALIZING
RELATIONS BETWEEN ROK AND JAPAN AND DISPATCH OF KOREAN
TROOPS TO VIETNAM, OR SUMMON KIM HYONG-UK TO KOREA FOR

INQUIRY INTO US ACTIVITIES WITHIN ROK. YI CALLED UPON FONMIN PARK TONG-CHIN TO EXPLAIN: 1) HOW THE INVESTIGATORS WERE ISSUED VISAS, 2) EXACT PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT TO KOREA, 3) WHAT COUNTERMEASURES ROKG CAN UNDERTAKE. NDP FIREBRAND O SE-UNG ALSO QUESTIONED ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO DELEGATION.

3. CHIEF OF DRP POLICY COMMITTEE PAK CHUN-KYU REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE INVESTIGATORS RECEIVED VISAS FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWING AMERICANS IN AMERICAN AGENCIES BUT THAT "INVESTIGATORS ARE PLOTTING TO MEET KOREANS IN SEOUL AND TO ATTACK ROKG". HE IS ALSO QUOTED ASKING IF INVESTIGATION WAS ADVENT OF "NEW IMPERIALISM". DRP ASSEMBLYMAN KANG SANG-UK TERMED PROPOSED INVESTIGATION "AN UNREASONABLE ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO SUBVERT THE ROKG".

4. FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED DEC 6 TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE QUESTION ON WHY INVESTIGATORS HAD BEEN ISSUED VISAS SAYING TRIP WAS SCHEDULED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AND THAT FRASER GROUP HAS ASKED FOR VISAS FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS WITH SUPPORT OF STATE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM. HE SAID THAT VISAS WERE ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH US-ROK VISA AGREEMENT AND TRADITIONAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE. FONMIN REPORTEDLY ADDED IN SAME SESSION THAT CONGRESSMAN FRASER'S "IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS" WILL BE "HARMFUL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY US-ROK RELATIONS". PRESS ADDED "IT BECAME KNOWN" FONMIN PLANNED TO ADVISE AMBASSADOR SNEIDER CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT "VISIT WILL NOT HELP SOLVE PAK TONG-SON CASE; RATHER IT WILL BE HARMFUL TO US-ROK RELATIONS.

5. HANKUK ILBO COLUMN BY CORRESPONDENT YUN KUK-PYONG EXPLORED THE RATIONALE FOR UPCOMING FRASER STAFF VISIT, SUGGESTING FRASER ACTING OUT OF POLITICAL MOTIVES IN HOPES OF SUCCEEDING TO SENATOR HUMPHREY'S SEAT. YUN FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT IF INVESTIGATORS FAIL TO TURN UP EVIDENCE THEY WILL BLAME ROKG FOR LACK OF COOPERATION.

6. CHUNGANG ILBO, HYONG-HYANG SHINMUM AND OFFICIAL SEOUL SHINMUN ALL CARRIED EDITORIALS ATTACKING VISIT, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT OBJECT TO INVESTIGATORS' INTERVIEWING AMERICANS. SEOUL SHINMIN TERMED VISIT "INSOLENT", AND QUOTED NDP LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG CALLING FOR FONMIN TO RESIGN TO SAVE FACE FOR KOREA AND SAYING THAT IF YOU HEAR YANKEE GO HOME IN KOREA IT IS DUE TO CONGRESSMAN FRASER. EDITORIAL SUGGESTED THAT INVESTIGATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOLERABLE IF PRIOR DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN HELD WITH ROKG BUT SAID THAT UNILATERAL DECISION WAS REFLECTIVE OF BIG POWER ATTITUDE. KYUNGHYANG SINMIN EXHORTED THE FRASER COMMITTEE TO BE SCRUPULOUS, BECAUSE THERE IS A

LIMIT TO FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION". CHUNGANG ILBO CLAIMED THAT FRASER COMMITTEE WAS STAGING AN ANTI-ROK CAMPAIGN THROUGH ITS ACTIVITIES. IN THIS IT DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN ETHICS COMMITTEE AND FRASER COMMITTEE INVESTIGATIONS, CHARACTERIZING THE FORMER AS LIMITED. CHUNGANG ILBO FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT IF VISA WAS ISSUED BY MISTAKE THEN THE MAN WHO ISSUED VISA MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS NEGLIGENCE.

7. CHOSON ILBO DEC 6 PUBLISHED EDITORIAL, SUBTITLED "TOO MUCH SELF-DEPRECIATION CAUSES IMPOLITENESS" NOTING "WE FEEL SOMETHING IS WRONG IN OUR HANDLING OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES INCLUDING PAK TONG-SON CASE". WHILE MAKING ONLY GLANCING REFERENCE TO DELEGATION
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VISIT, EDITORIAL CARRIES OVERALL TONE OF NATIONALISM AND CRITICISM OF KOREAN DEFERENCE TOWARD FOREIGNERS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL10274
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770451-1089
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 342884
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS COVERAGE OF FRASER STAFFDEL VISIT; ASSEMBLY COMMENTS SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS CONTINUED FRONT PAGE COVERAGE OF UPCOMING VISIT OF FRASER COMMITTEE INVESTIGATORS D
TAGS: OREP, KS, US
To: STATE TOKYO
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ee76a70a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009